

# AMAZONS of TODAY AND YESTER YEAR

Friday night at the Duke of York's Theatre in London Sir Arthur W. Pinero's farcical comedy, as he described "The Amazons" was put on once more before a grateful public. Charles Frohman, who is making this revival with some of the most popular actors in London, plans to bring the company in August to the Empire Theatre. Although Daniel Frohman made "The Amazons" one of the most charming comedies of the old Lyceum Theatre in Fourth Avenue, this is not the first time Charles Frohman has been associated with this comedy. After the New York run of the comedy, Charles Frohman bought the rights to it from his brother and sent it over the country, with Johnstone Bennett playing the part of Lord Tommy.

In spite of the admirable characterization of the other roles in this play it is in the three daughters that the principal interest of the audience centres. The Marchioness of Castleford has raised her three girls at her estate, Overbrook Park, as the most absolute tomboys. Here, dressed as men, they led an idyllic life, which is not disturbed until the serpent enters in the form of a man and the trouble begins.

"The Amazons" was produced first on March 7, 1893, at the Court Theatre, with the following cast:

Alfred, Earl of Tweenways. Weedon Grossmith  
Harrington, Viscount Litterly. F. Kerr  
Andre, Count de Gravel. J. Elliott  
Sir Roger Meneilly. J. B. Bennett  
Fiona, a gaudy dancer. W. Quinn  
Yvette, a servant. Compton Coates  
Oria, a poetess. R. Nainby  
Marchioness of Castleford. Rose Levere

The first scene is laid in "The Tangle," the second passes in the interior of the house. The novelty of the work as designed by London that the play had 1111 performances at its first production, which fell below the Pinero standard, but did not disappoint its producers since it is a long run for a play of such very light texture. It was acted successfully in the provinces and later in Australia. It was not until February 19, 1904, that Daniel Frohman brought the work out at the Lyceum Theatre.

It ran for nineteen weeks in New York to the delight of the public which seemed to find the "punch" of the work in the very attractive costumes which the girls wore in their disguises as boys. Georgia Cayvan was at the height of her popularity as leading lady of the Lyceum Theatre at this time and Bessie Tyree, always one of the popular comedienne in the company, made her most striking hit as the masculine Lord Tommy. Katherine Florence, who might have been accepted as a type of tender femininity, played Lady Winchelsea, which in the original performance in London was acted by Elaine Terriss. Patie Brown played Lord Tommy in the first London performance. She is the Australian actress who came out here with William Gillette in Barrie's comedy "The Admirable Crichton." Lily Hanbury, who was for one season in this country with Beethoven Tree, played the aristocratic Lady Nellie, which fell here to Georgia Cayvan. At a revival of the same comedy at the Lyceum

Theatre on December 17, 1895, Isabel Irving played this role.

Although it was presented before "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," Sir Arthur Pinero wrote the serious tragedy of Paula first. He had almost the same difficulty in getting this tragedy of nineteenth century life in London finally produced over there as he did here. It was not until Mrs. Patrick Campbell took up the role that the play so long written was finally seen behind the footlights. One of the great causes of the success of "The Amazons" was found in the fact that the author attempted no criticisms of life nor did he deal with moral or social problems. He made a comedy of modern English existence just as romantic as if he had been a descendant of the immortals of the stage who moved in the shadows of the forest of Arden.

Pauline Chase, who is to be the Lady Tommy in this performance, is much more popular in London than in her own country. She is well known on the London stage through her performances

of "Peter Pan," which gained widespread popularity for her. Here she was known only as the girl with the pink rascals and when Charles Frohman brought her back two years ago to appear in the leading role of "Our Miss Gibbs" New York quite refused to take her in any such important capacity as Mr. Frohman thought it should.

Marie Lohr has been for several years a popular London actress, noted principally for her beauty. She has appeared with Beethoven Tree and at the principal London theatres, as the advertisements in the London newspapers say. Phyllis Neilson-Terry is the youngest celebrity on the theatre stage and the latest of the Terry family to gain fame. She is a daughter of Julia Neilson and Fred Terry and a niece of Ellen Terry. She went on the stage two years ago in the version of the play called here "The Cottage in the Air." She made an immediate success and was engaged at His Majesty's Theatre, where she appeared in "Tribly." When Sir Beethoven Tree revived "Othello" at

his theatre she was selected for "Desdemona." Here she will play Lady Nellie.

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his own people. In St. Petersburg it is forbidden for men or women dancers to appear showing their bare limbs. To this extent are the Russian ballet's rules under the influence of the old classic ballet. On his return to the Imperial Opera House after his second visit to Paris, however, Nijinski thought he would risk the experiment of appearing at home just as he does in Paris and as Mikail Mordkin does here, neither of the dancers of course ever having dared anything

man dancer of his time. He has appeared a great deal with Tamara Karsavina, a character dancer of wonderful eloquence in her poses, although she is not supposed to rank with Anna Pavlova. In London Pavlova and Nijinski have frequently danced together in the ballets at Covent Garden.

In addition to their older works such as "The Dream of the Rose" which Karsavina and Nijinski have frequently danced in London and Paris, "The Bird of Fire" and "The Dances of Prince Igor," the dancers have this year performed a new work for which Raynaldo Hahn wrote the score. This was "The Blue God." Its action was devised by Jean Cocteau and "E. Madrazo." Is not the second name to indicate the wife of the composer? Raynaldo Hahn married a daughter of the artist Madrazo. In this ballet Nijinski played the god and some of his poses are remarkable although the same might be said of nearly all the dancers in the company. The simple story relates to the efforts of a young girl to keep her lover out of the clutches of the priests of the Blue God who were trying to force him to join them.

The priests make her a prisoner and watch is kept over her by various wild beasts which the priests send. But the Blue God himself hears of her plight, releases her and unites the two lovers with his own hands.

Nijinski, who is the great genius of the Russian dancing to-day, is still in the early twenties. His face is marked Calmuck with high cheek bones, flat nose and the slanting eyes. His figure is so developed as to seem nothing but muscle. His springs into the air are said to surpass those of any of his rivals. One of the Paris critics wrote that when he jumped, the finger of Apollo seemed to reach down from the heavens and hold him suspended in the air. It is not probable that the recent incident will affect his popularity with a public which has been faithful to him until this time.

Nijinski and his associates were announced last winter at the Metropolitan Opera House, but the contract was cancelled. It is said that they will come to the Century Theatre next season.

**PINERO AND BROWNING.**

English Playwright Describes Some of the Poet's Failures.

There is value in the speech made by Arthur Wing Pinero at the banquet of the Browning centenary for every student of the stage. The famous English drama-

have brought philosophy to the mind that I begin to wonder whether some defect or some quality in my play may not have had a good deal to do with its rejection at the hands of the public.

"Browning's first essays in drama were made under the most favorable auspices; all the best forces of the moment were in league with him. Macready, the leading actor of the day, was eager to distinguish himself in new work of intellectual quality and accepted 'Straford' with a keenness which we see in his diary gradually oozed away as the play passed through rehearsal. What is the reason, then, why this great poet, this student and analyst of human nature, this man who thought himself specially endowed with dramatic faculty, was constantly repulsed in his efforts to conquer the actual stage? The reasons fall under two heads—technical and psychological.

"Browning never realized the conditions of the medium in which he worked, and his method of analysis, of unpacking the human heart with words, was wholly unadapted to the apprehension of a theatrical audience. His plays have stories, only he omitted to set the forth in a form and in terms that made them clear, effective, comprehensible. Of the art of exposition, of letting the audience clearly understand the condition of affairs from which the drama takes its rise, Browning did not dream.

"His method as to show us a number of characters elaborately excavating the situation and probing its intricacies in copious orations before we have any idea of what that situation is. He disdains to put himself for a single moment at the spectator's point of view and to consider what that hapless person must know and understand if he is to follow the mental processes of the characters.

"Rereading and leisurely cogitation are impossible in the theatre. The spectators cannot request the actor to speak such and such a speech again and give them time to think it over. A passage not taken in at once is never taken in and a sequence of such passages very quickly bewilders and bores an audience. There is a limit to the numbness of wit that can be demanded, even of the ideal spectator, and a man who counts on a theatre full of ideal spectators thereby proclaims himself no dramatist.

"Drama was, in Browning's eyes, essentially a matter of words; and words to him meant not conversations, but orations. The drama, even in poetic form, ought to give us some sort of credible presentment of human intercourse—and how can we picture a conversation in which each of the interlocutors in turn stands and does nothing, while the other is addressing himself to copious analytic periods? The psychological reason for the failure of Browning's theatrical ambitions is that his whole method of analysis is discursive and not really dramatic. He had a genius for conjectural digging into souls but no talent for making his people express themselves characteristically. It is never the imaginary personage that speaks, but always Robert Browning imagining himself into the



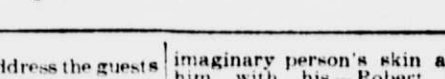
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The minute Rodin came to the defence of Nijinski and pronounced the figure of the faun so beautiful that he would love to model it the critics of the dancer threw themselves on him and declared that he was defaming the Government by promising to give his works to the State for the privilege of living during his lifetime in the Hotel Biran. It might happen, in their opinion, that his works would so decline in value that they would in no way afford appropriate compensation for the use of the Hotel Biran during his lifetime. Other criticisms were directed toward the character of the works, which he exhibited in what had previously been a home of religious